



ORGANIC PRODUCTS





“Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It emphasises the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, taking into account that regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfil any specific function within the system.”

Codex Alimentarius Commission definition of Organic Agriculture



Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 on Organic Agriculture and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs and the complying labeling of agricultural products and foodstuffs.

There have been A LOT of amendmends. It is expected that it will be replaced by a new regulation which incorporates these amendments.

Defines the minimum requirements for organic farming in all Member States of the European Union.

Comprises, among others, standards for the agricultural production, the processing, the importation and the labeling of organic plant and livestock production.

Bans the use of genetic engineering in organically produced foodstuffs.



Council Regulation 1804/99 prescribes the production of bovine, porcine, sheep, goats, equidae and poultry and of beekeeping. The organic production of rodents or deer has to fulfill the "standards accepted or recognized by the Member States of the European Union". Aquaculture is not yet included.



In the United States, the National Organic Programme (NOP), managed by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has superseded the individual State programmes and has set up uniform national guidelines on organic products, in order to protect consumers from being misled and to facilitate the trade of organically produced foodstuffs within the U.S.A.



In 1999 the Codex Alimentarius Commission published guidelines for the production, processing, labelling and marketing of organic foodstuffs (CAC/GL 32-1999). Until now, these guidelines only include unprocessed products of vegetable origin and processed organic foodstuffs, basically of vegetable ingredients.

The guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius provide criteria to evaluate the equivalency required by the Council Regulation on Organic Agriculture and is an indispensable instrument for the preparation and evaluation of guidelines from national certification bodies for organically produced foodstuffs and for the legal regulations in third countries.



All Organic Products must be certified by an authorised public or private inspection and certification body.

Authorised bodies have to meet the requirements of the EN 45011 Standard ("Guidelines for bodies operating product certification"). or ISO Guide 65. Both standards describe the requirements on the fundamental structure and procedures of certification bodies.



While the Council Regulation speaks of "inspection bodies", in ISO-Guide 65 and EN 45011 the term "certification bodies" is used. Inspection is part of the certification process and is addressed in the EN 45004 Standard.

Furthermore in both the ISO-Guide 65 and the EN 45011 the term "product" is used in the widest sense and includes processes.

Compliance to EN 45011 and / or ISO Guide 65 by certification bodies is officially recognised by their accreditation by competent national authorities.



Imports of Organic Products to the E.U.

1. Inclusion in the Third Country Register

Non EU-Member States, which have provided evidence that their production methods and inspection and certification measures are equivalent to the EU rules can be admitted to the third country register.

2. Import Authorisation

Importers to the EU have to apply for an import authorisation concerning organic products. This has to be done before the goods are marketed in the EU with reference to their organic origin.

The products have to be produced according to production rules equivalent to the European ones. Furthermore, the inspection measures have to be of "equivalent effectiveness" and the inspection measures have to be applied "effectively and permanently".



Information Required for Inclusion in the Third Country Register

1. Specification of type and, if possible, estimated quantities of agricultural products and food stuffs intended for export to the European Community.
2. Information about the rules of agricultural production applied, specifically:
 - the basic principles as set out in Annex I to Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91
 - the products permitted for use in agricultural production, namely plant protection products, fertilisers or soil improvement products
 - the ingredients of non-agricultural origin permitted for use in processing agricultural products, as well as procedures and substances permitted in processing.



Information Required for Inclusion in the Third Country Register

3. A description of the inspection and certification system and the authorised bodies, including:

- **A list of all inspection and certification bodies**
- **Inspection and certification procedures**
- **A list of sanctions in case of non- conformances**
- **A list of processing units and exporters to the Community**
- **The number of producers and the area in organic cultivation**

4. If available, reports compiled by independent experts on the effective implementation of the production and inspection rules.



Imports of Organic Products to the U.S.A.

1. Bilateral Agreement

2. NOP Certification

The USDA may accredit inspection and certification bodies in any country according to the National Organic Programme requirements.

Products certified by such an accredited body may be imported into the United States with reference to their organic production origin.

Inspection and Certification Schemes



1. Direct Certification

An accredited inspection and certification body from the EU or the USA provides inspection and certification services *in situ*, according to Regulation 2092/91 and / or NOP.

2. Co- Certification

A local inspection and / or certification body, not recognised in the country of destination, provides inspection and/or certification services. This local body is supervised by an accredited inspection and certification body from the EU or the US, which provides the necessary certificates for the country of destination according to Regulation 2092/91 and/or NOP.

Alternatively, a local inspection body, which fulfils the requirements of EN 45004 may provide inspection services, while an internationally accredited body provides certification.

Requirements for a self-contained Organic Production and Certification Scheme



1. Specifications

1.1 A legal framework that regulates the production, processing, handling, labelling and marketing of organic agriculture products, including:

- **a definition of organic agriculture**
- **the name domestically given to organic agriculture and of its derived products.**
- **The sectors covered (e.g. crop production, animal husbandry, food processing and handling, labelling).**

1.2 A legal framework that regulates the inspection and certification system for organic products.

1.3 A legal framework that regulates the accreditation of inspection and certification bodies.



2. Institutions

2.1 A public sector competent authority which will:

- follow international developments and trends and incorporate them in the national legislation**
- negotiate mutual recognition agreements with national governments and international bodies (EU, IFOAM)**
- form a strategy for organic production**
- oversee its implementation**
- co-ordinate research and development schemes**
- decide on any grants or other fiscal instruments to support organic production, education and training and promotion and marketing of organic products.**
- Oversee the activities of the authorised inspection and certification bodies, in cooperation with the accreditation authority.**



2.2 A public sector competent accreditation authority which will:

- Develop, maintain and implement an accreditation system for inspection and certification bodies and testing laboratories.
- Select and train assessors.
- Negotiate with national and international organisations for mutual recognition.



2.3 Public or private inspection and specification bodies, which:

- **Will be staffed by personnel competent to evaluate organic production processes and products.**
- **Have a structure and procedures that conform to the requirements of the EN 45004, EN 45011, ISO Guide 65 and NOP Standards.**
- **Have the resources to install and maintain a system conforming to the above standards.**
- **Obtain accreditation according to one or more of the above standards.**
- **Participate in international organisations.**



2.4 Public or private testing laboratories, which:

- **Will be staffed by personnel competent to perform testing for pesticide residue monitoring and soil analyses.**
- **Have a structure and procedures that conform to the requirements of the ISO 17025 Standard.**
- **Have the resources to install and maintain a system conforming to the above standard.**
- **Obtain accreditation according to the above standard.**